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ASK the EDITORS

AE-1 The Stepney Hoard

We have received some additional information on AE-1 The Stepney Hoard from Eric P. Newman of St. Louis Missouri - - -

The answer of editor Michael J. Hodder to the question about the contents of the Stepney or Fairfield Hoard indicated that there were no Machins pieces in the group. (CNL July 1993, p. 1372) That comment was probably caused by my own ambiguity about 35 years ago. I had stated that there were 72 counterfeit British and Irish halfpence in the Hoard. This was before Machins pieces were listed. Hodder reasonably interpreted this as meaning counterfeit British and Irish made halfpence whereas I meant counterfeit British and Irish style halfpence.

The 72 counterfeit British and Irish style halfpence in the hoard were sent to me on approval by Walter Breen when he was working for Stack's. I selected 10 or 12 pieces at \$5 to \$10 each and returned the balance. These prices seemed enormous to me at the time, but among the pieces I bought were the 1776 Machins featured in "The Vermont Numismatic Enigma" (Vlack 9-76B); a 1778 Machins uncirculated red brown (11-78A); a 1787 uncirculated red brown (19-87C); a 1787 uncirculated some red (17-87A); a 1788 uncirculated red brown (23-88A); and perhaps a 1787 uncirculated full red (20-87C). I do not remember the date of purchase but could go mining in my files to try to find out if that becomes of interest. It had to be before my 1958 "Enigma" article and even could have been before Breen's 1952 Hoard article.

Ned Barnsley in his 1962 comment on the pieces in the Hoard was correct about Machins pieces being present. Although

he used the word "Bungtowns" instead of "evasions" that was then customary. I tried to define the meaning of the word "Bungtown" in 1976.

This all shows how continual research and writing can add to accuracy.

Eric P. Newman

from ye Editor

Mr. Newman's comments regarding the condition of his specimens plus the comments of Mike Hodder in the previous issue that "Some collectors have questioned whether there ever was a find of colonial era coppers near Stepney, CT." brings to mind an observation made by Ned Barnsley to me many years ago. Ned's belief was that the "Stepney Hoard was a fraud."

This harsh judgement was based, he told me, on his opinion that no matter how well protected, no copper coins could have survived being buried in a barnyard for 162 years and still retain the pristine surface condition exhibited by many of the specimens!

There can be no doubt that the Stepney Hoard was in fact a remarkable accumulation of early American coppers uncovered at a time when none of them had any significant monetary value in the numismatic marketplace. Whether or not the source of the specimens "beneath a Stepney barn" is accurate will never be known with certainty!

JCS

The following are two additional inputs on AE-3 and AE-6 from Associate Editor Mike Hodder.

AE-3. What happened to Hall's collection of Connecticut?

After working recently with Hillyer Ryder's collection of Connecticut perhaps I can shed some more light on the problem of the disposition of Hall's collection. Hall's own notebooks include an inventory listing of